

the last two chairmen have reduced the legislative branch substantially. We are not even back up to where we were in 1993 and 1994, even with inflation. I hope we can stay below that.

I also point out that we are substantially below the caps that were given to us. We are going to report a bill that is substantially below the caps. I am not sure any other committee will be doing that.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to all of us in the body that if they have a \$1.8 trillion corporation, they are not going to talk about not having adequate staff and qualified staff to carry out the funding and the appropriations of that \$1.8 trillion appropriations.

□ 2300

If one does, then one is pennywise and pound foolish because one has to have adequate people and pay them adequately, especially in today's market, to carry out that task.

We have in our report returned a portion of the MRAs to the Members, and I certainly support that. I agree with the gentleman, what he said about a lot of Members will return portions of the budget. I commend them for doing that. If they have the ability to do that, they certainly should.

But we all know that every district is different in this country. If I were in, for instance, a district where I had one television station and I could report to the people what was happening in the Congress without mail or without any communication other than that television station, and there are Members of the Congress that do that, then I would be able to return more of my money.

But I have 15 rural counties, and the only way I can report is to give them a report by mail. In my district, over 90 percent of the people regard that as favorable, and they respond so. They point out that they want more information, not less, about what is going on in Congress. As I say, if the people in my district support that, then I am certainly going to continue to put my efforts in that area to tell them what is going on in this body.

I think that, as I say, we have done a good job. The word "conference" means that we go across the body and we have to confer with the Senate. They asked for a lot more money. They did not get it all. They got some. Because, in a conference, one has to give and take. We would have liked to have spent less money, but we held the line very diligently. I think we will be proud of this report.

I would also point out that I do not think any Member who has spoken tonight has consulted with either the committee chairman or the ranking member or the staff to see what actually we have done. They may be surprised that we have held the line much better than previously than what they think may have been happening.

So I would commend this report to my colleagues. It will be coming before

we leave in August. I think that my colleagues may be more proud of it in this body than they might think.

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I want to remind my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, of what I said at the beginning, which is I think our appropriators have done an excellent job thus far this year, and I think we are going to finish up the process with an excellent track record.

My colleague indicated that there are, in all likelihood going to be pleasant features to this bill when we see it. I hope, in fact, that the conferees did hold the line and that the funding levels will, in fact, reflect the will of the House as it was voted on back in June.

Again, we have done a great job thus far ensuring that we are going to see the surpluses that we believe we will see, and that means we are going to be able to do the right thing with respect to Social Security, with respect to lowering the tax burden on the American people.

I just hope that we finish the job and we show that we can lead by example that a 2.8 percent increase in our own budgets is sufficient for us. We do not need to go higher than that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to instruct.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to instruct offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with my colleagues the results of the highly productive and informative experience that the U.S. delegation had at the Annual Session of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly—or the OSCE PA. As many of you know, this year seventeen members of Congress formed the U.S. delegation, and as the U.S. delegation does every year, we attended the Parliamentary Assembly's Annual Session in a member country of the OSCE. This year's Annual Session was in St. Petersburg, Russia and met from July 6–10. I am pleased to inform my colleagues that our week in St. Petersburg was a successful one, both for the entire Assembly and especially for the U.S. delegation.

The purpose of the Annual Session is to bring parliamentarians together in order to discuss and assess developments in conflict resolution within Europe, as well as to form proactive means of approaching a wide range of security issues, including arms control, preventive diplomacy, human rights and economic security. These thoughts, recommendations, and goals are then compiled into a declaration, which is ultimately adopted by the entire Parliamentary Assembly.

I draw inspiration from this document for many reasons. On its surface, this document is a comprehensive and vital educational tool. It brings to our attention gross violations of human rights, such as the international trafficking of women and children; it offers us effective methods to continuing the peace process in Yugoslavia and Kosovo; and it describes initiatives of securing peace and democracy throughout Europe. In effect, the St. Petersburg Declaration serves as an important reference on a wide scope of events and issues, which better aids us all in understanding the current global order.

On a secondary level however, the St. Petersburg Declaration, and the OSCE PA declarations that preceded it, demonstrate the value of inter-cooperation and dialogue between countries. The OSCE parliamentarians form a body of representatives from fifty-five governments throughout Europe, Central Asia, and North America; and it has adopted an all-embracing approach in its membership and approach to security, conflict resolution, and economic cooperation in the OSCE region. Consequently the Parliamentarians bring to the OSCE PA a vast range of knowledge and experiences that complements and supplements one another. In a time of fungible borders and instantaneous communication between continents and cultures, it behooves us all to understand these varying perspectives and opinions.

More important, however, is the OSCE's ability to use this collection of experience and thought for the greater good of security in Europe and justice throughout the world. The

sum of the parliamentarians' collective expertises and experiences is so much greater than the individual parts. Indeed, when brought together and shared in such a forum, there is an exchange of ideas that better enables us to understand the root of global concerns, and ultimately how the international community can best take action to remove these problems. In effect, we are able to combine the best ideas and developments of our various countries in order to work toward peace and cooperation throughout the world.

Such innovation and progress would simply not be possible if we acted as isolated agents, and I firmly believe that the effectiveness of the OSCE PA lies in its ability to draw on both our shared and unique experiences. The St. Petersburg Declaration reflects the value of this interrelationship, and I am grateful for the opportunity to both learn from and contribute toward it.

While I am certainly proud to be a member of a distinguished body like the OSCE PA, it gave me particular pleasure to attend the Assembly as part of the U.S. delegation. This group of seventeen members enjoyed many successes in St. Petersburg. The St. Petersburg Declaration contains several U.S. authored initiatives, including Representative Chris Smith's resolution on "The Trafficking of Women and Children," Senator George Voinovich's "Regional Infrastructure in South-Eastern Europe," section and Representative Louise Slaughter's section on "The Assassination of Galina Starovoitova." Moreover, I, along with several other members of the U.S. delegation, contributed significantly to the chapter on "Common Security and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century."

The accomplishments of the U.S. delegation were certainly appreciated by the entire Parliamentary Assembly, and we were each encouraged to share the principles and goals of the OSCE with our colleagues in Congress. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to also encourage other members of Congress to familiarize themselves with the OSCE, and ultimately to take steps to continue our participation with this organization.

We are faced with a time of significant regional conflict. Eastern Europe is still in the recovery process of Slobodan Milosevic's brutal ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians, and it will take many months, if not years, before the hundreds of thousands of refugees are able to return to their homes and resume their familiar lifestyles. Indeed, it will take considerable time for all of the residents of this region to recover from the rampage and injustices that were committed in this area.

These conflicts may sometimes seem isolated and removed from our own challenges and goals as a nation, but we have, in fact, entered a time where our setbacks and successes should be shared. We have a responsibility to use our successes as a means of alleviating other countries' setbacks. As I have said, the OSCE presents us with a viable and effective forum to share our resources, and the United States needs to remain engaged and build upon its place within their collective dialogue, rapporteur missions, peacekeeping operations, and peaceful dispute resolutions.

Last month I introduced a bipartisan resolution expressing this sentiment. H. Con. Res. 161 extends the support of Congress to the OSCE and the goals of the St. Petersburg Declaration, as well as urges the United

States to continue its role with this important international organization. Please show your support of the OSCE by cosponsoring this resolution.

As key players in the international community, the United States has historically and continues to take an active part in international organizations and institutions, such as the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the OSCE. I am confident that our commitment to these institutions will remain strong. Ultimately, it is my hope and belief that together we can secure peace, democracy, and justice throughout the world.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SPRATT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IMPORTANT PROVISIONS FOR PATIENT PROTECTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. Speaker, after careful thought and consideration, I rise this evening in support of patient protection. I do this for a very simple reason in the final analysis. I believe that doctors, not insurance companies or HMOs, must have the final say on patient care. That is why I have many strong concerns with the Senate bill and would oppose that legislation in its present form.

Here are the provisions I believe are important to Americans, including those in my district: Legislative protections against abuse should be extended to the more than 100 million not covered in the Senate bill. There must be independent external medical review. Patients need maximum flexibility to select doctors and should be able to see pediatricians and OB/GYNs without referrals from other doctors. ER visits should be governed by a prudent lay person standard. Doctors should define medical necessity. There must be meaningful economic sanctions against companies that refuse to provide care approved by the external review process.

I know the importance of controlling health care costs, but a business bottom line, Mr. Speaker, should never be allowed to take precedence over medical necessity. We can allow insurers to continue to control costs and provide necessary patient protections. Many States have done that, including my own, Louisiana, including our neighbor, Texas. We can do it as a Nation.

TRIBUTE IN HONOR OF OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF GRAND HAVEN, MICHIGAN, AS COAST GUARD CITY, USA, AND CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF COAST GUARD TRADITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, this weekend marks a very special time in the history of one of the communities in the Second Congressional District of Michigan.

For the past 75 years, Grand Haven, Michigan has celebrated its relationship with the U.S. Coast Guard and the contributions of the Coast Guard to our country as a whole.

Since 1934, the city has hosted the Coast Guard Festival, which has included a major parade, displays of various Coast Guard vessels, and a variety of ceremonies that focus on the special relationship, the special partnership between the Coast Guard and the community of Grand Haven.

Since 1963, when then-U.S. Coast Guard Admiral Richard Schmidtman attended one of these celebrations to dedicate the city's famous Musical Fountain, Grand Haven has proudly displayed the unofficial title of "Coast Guard City, U.S.A.". This designation was taken directly from Admiral Schmidtman's remarks. Ever since, signs near the entrances of the city have informed visitors that they were entering Coast Guard City, U.S.A.

As I said, that designation has been unofficial. That is until this year. As part of the Coast Guard reauthorization act of 1999, this Congress made it possible for the Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard to officially declare an American town as "Coast Guard City U.S.A.".

I am happy to report to this House that, on this coming Saturday, August 7, 1999, U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Admiral James Loy will be in Grand Haven to make it official. Grand Haven will be Coast Guard city U.S.A.

□ 2310

He will do that this week at the 1999 Coast Guard festival.

I have worked with several Members of the House and the other body for several years to make this designation a reality. I would like to thank all the people who worked with me to get this legislation approved, including Senators ABRAHAM and LEVIN, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS), the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST), and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SHUSTER), who were especially helpful.

I also want to thank the local officials in Michigan, especially Coast Guard festival executive director Jerry Smith. Also various people at the U.S. Coast Guard, including former Commandant Admiral Robert Kramek. And Members of my staff, especially Todd Sutton and Chris LaGrand. I would like to thank all of these people for their patience and for their hard work.

Most of all, I congratulate the people of Grand Haven and their dedication and respect for the men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard. For more than 75 years, this community on the shores of Lake Michigan at the mouth of the